

## CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A system for testing semiconductor devices, comprising:
  - a force retainer mounted on a material handler; and
  - a force locator interposed between the force retainer and a circuit board and, together with the force retainer, adapted to prevent the circuit board from bending; and
  - a stiffener ring mounted on the circuit board and surrounding the force locator.
2. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1 where the force retainer comprises:
  - outer and inner rings; and
  - a plurality of ribs connecting the outer ring to the inner ring.
3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 comprising where the system  
~~comprises~~  
a test head including a plurality of connectors connecting the test head to the circuit board;  
where the force retainer includes ~~comprises~~ a plurality of openings between adjacent radial ribs; and  
where the plurality of connectors protrude through the plurality of openings.
4. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force retainer is steel.
5. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force retainer is cast iron.
6. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force locator is mounted on the circuit board.
7. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force locator has a same shape as a probe head.
8. (Original) The system of claim 1 where the force locator is adjustable to accommodate spacing limitations between the circuit board and the force retainer.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The tester of claim ~~10~~ 13 where the interface unit comprises a probe head attached to the circuit board on one side and having contact pins protruding from another side.

12. (Currently Amended) The tester of claim ~~11~~ 13 where the force locator is a same shape as the probe head.

13. (Currently Amended) A The tester of claim 10 comprising:  
a top plate on a material handler;  
a force retainer fixedly mounted on the top plate, the force retainer including an outer  
ring connected to an inner ring by a plurality of ribs; and  
an interface unit removably mounted on the force retainer and including a force  
locator, the force locator being fixedly mounted on a circuit board, where the interface unit  
comprises including a circuit board stiffener ring mounted on the circuit board and  
surrounding the force locator.

14. (Currently Amended) The tester of claim 9 13 comprising  
a test head adapted to provide electrical signals to a the device under test through at  
least one connector, the at least one connector protruding from at least one open portion  
between adjacent ribs.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of testing semiconductor devices, comprising:  
fixedly mounting a force retainer to a material handler;  
removably mounting an interface unit to the force retainer;  
mounting a force locator on the interface unit; and  
surrounding the force locator with a stiffener ring.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 comprising mounting a the  
stiffener ring to a circuit board.

AMENDMENT

PAGE 4 OF 7

DOCKET NO. 5038-265  
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17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 comprising providing the force retainer with inner and outer rings; ~~and connected with a plurality of ribs~~  
connecting the outer ring to the inner ring using at least one radial rib.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15 comprising:  
positioning a test head on one side of the handler;  
providing the test head with at least one connector; and  
threading the connector through the force retainer.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 comprising:  
bringing a device under test into contact with the interface unit thereby creating a probe force;  
directing the probe force from the interface unit to the force retainer; and  
retaining the probe force using the force retainer.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 ~~15~~ 16 comprising distributing a probe force on the force retainer using the force locator.